



WEEK 50

FRIDAY 13 DEC 2013

THIS WEEK

- Columnist: Jesse Learmonth on lean startup
- Bet365 HQ expansion to create 600 jobs
- PokerStars blocked from NJ market
- Tweets of the week

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TOP STORY

FOOTBALL ARRESTS AFTER FIX CLAIMS

Investigation launched into alleged spot-fixing



Five professional footballers have been arrested as part of a National Crime Agency (NCA) inquiry into match-fixing, along with a former non-league player. The players were questioned after one of them, ex-Charlton and Portsmouth defender Sam Sodje, was filmed telling an undercover newspaper reporter that he could arrange for players to get themselves booked or sent off in exchange for cash.

Former Nigeria international Sodje described to a Sun on Sunday journalist how he punched an opponent during a League One match to get a red card, for which he was paid £70,000, while he claimed to have arranged for another player to be paid £30,000 for receiving a yellow card in a Championship match. He also indicated he was prepared to fix games at next summer's World Cup.

The other men arrested are Sodje's brothers Akpo, a Tranmere Rovers striker, and Steven, who played at non-league level for several teams, as well as Blackburn striker DJ Campbell, Oldham Athletic winger Christian Montano and Tranmere defender Ian Goodison. All six men have been bailed as the NCA investigation continues, with the Football Association and Gambling

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Four of the footballers arrested as part of the match-fixing investigation (clockwise from main pic): Sam Sodje (ex-Portsmouth), DJ Campbell (Blackburn), Christian Montano (Oldham) and Ian Goodison (Tranmere)

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FROM FRONT PAGE ►

Commission working closely with the law enforcers.

Meanwhile two non-league footballers have been charged with conspiracy to defraud following a separate match-fixing investigation. Michael Boateng and Hakeem Adelakun of Conference South team Whitehawk FC will appear at Birmingham Crown Court today (Friday) while two other men, Chann Sankaran and Krishna Sanjey Ganeshan, remain in custody on the same charge.

Following this week's arrests, senior representatives from five major sports met UK government ministers to discuss approaches to dealing with corruption. Executives from the governing bodies of football, rugby union, rugby league, cricket and horse racing, along with figures from the Premier League, Football League, British Horseracing Authority and Gambling Commission gathered at the offices of culture secretary Maria Miller to analyse general anti-corruption measures but not individual cases.

KEY POINTS

- Six men, including four current professional footballers, bailed following match-fixing arrests
- NCA investigation launched after player makes spot-fixing claims
- Sport governing bodies meet with culture secretary to discuss anti-corruption measures

ONLINE POKER

POKERSTARS LOCKED OUT OF NJ Rational Group licence application suspended for two years

PokerStars have been blocked from entering the New Jersey online gaming market after their owners had their application for a licence suspended for



two years. State regulator the Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE) ruled that Rational Group's application will not be reviewed

for the duration of the period, primarily due to the unresolved 2011 federal indictment against Stars founder Isai Scheinberg for allegedly violating the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) and the Illegal Gambling Business Act.

Having revealed that the suspension also related to the "involvement of certain PokerStars executives" with post-UIGEA US online gaming, a DGE spokesperson added that the application could be reactivated within the two years if "significantly changed circumstances" were demonstrated.

Rational Group, who were seeking to enter New Jersey via their partnership with Atlantic City land-based casino Resorts Casino Hotel, said they were "disappointed" with the decision but would remain in "open dialogue" with the DGE.

KEY POINTS

- PokerStars blocked from entering New Jersey online gaming market

UK NEWS

BET365 ANNOUNCE MAJOR HQ EXPANSION PLANS

Operators' enlarged UK base to bring jobs and economy boost

Operators Bet365 are to create 600 jobs in a multi-million pound expansion that involves moving their headquarters to the Etruria suburb of Stoke-on-Trent.

Plans have been submitted to build a new 13,000 sq m, three-storey building as the firm seeks to move on from its current base at Festival Park. Work

on the new base is expected to start in summer 2014, with the old offices either sold off or rented out.

Bet365 joint chief executive Denise Coates said: "At the moment we contribute over £80m annually into the economy in terms of staff wages, so it's a significant amount being invested in the area."

"We've outgrown our existing offices and it's important for us to proceed with this project to enable us to continue to base ourselves in the area, taking account of both our existing workforce and planned future growth."



Artist's impressions of how Bet365's new HQ could look

KEY POINTS

- Bet365 to create 600 jobs through a major HQ expansion in Stoke-on-Trent

ONLINE GAMING

CAESARS ISSUE ONLINE WARNING

Operators fear impact of internet gaming

Caesars Entertainment are concerned that regulated online gaming in New Jersey and Nevada will harm their land-based casino business. In a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission,

Tweets of the week 

*"This year's Global Gaming Expo was the biggest since 2008."
American Gaming Association [@AGAupdate]*

*"A report by @DeloitteUK commissioned by the RCA shows horseracing is the best value day out in sport."
The Jockey Club [@TheJockeyClub]*

*"Oh my God I just realised my Candy Crush machine can make phone calls! #hiddenfeature."
Australian comedian and actor Hamish Blake [@hamishblake]*



the industry giants stated that internet gambling “may reduce customer visitation and spend in our traditional

casinos in Nevada and New Jersey”. The firm consider online services in the states, including their own, to be in competition with their live offerings.

However company spokesman Gary Thompson moved to downplay the comments, stating that such “cautionary language” had to be included for legal reasons and that the firm considered a negative impact to be “less, rather than more, likely”.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ROUNDUP: SPORTECH; PLAYSCAN, SKRILL

The rest of the week’s key stories

- **Sportech** have agreed a US-facing online gaming joint venture with suppliers **NYX Gaming Group**.
- Bookmakers **Betfred** have paid out to punters on an Australian Ashes victory after just two Tests.
- **Skrill** have announced they are to exit the Canadian market after a review.

GUEST COLUMNIST

“LEAN STARTUP LETS YOU INNOVATE WITHOUT THE COST”



by **Jesse Learmonth**
Betting technology company president

“While they are ubiquitous today, it’s easy to forget that iPhones –

and all the possibilities created by them – only came into existence in 2007. Yet for all of the mobile-centric innovations introduced to the world over six short years, it would be a stretch to suggest that sportsbook operators have developed mobile offerings that truly utilise the full capabilities of today’s mobile devices. Progress has certainly accelerated in the past couple of years but by and large the industry is still generally regarded as lagging in innovation (particularly by those looking in from the outside).

It’s not hard to understand why this is: being in the bookmaking business means facing ever-changing regulations, complex operational challenges, and an increasingly competitive landscape. When annual budgets are due, it’s natural to prioritise items that support the core business, which often comes at the expense of investment in product innovation. Indeed, the most common sentiment we’ve heard repeated from operators over the past four years running our business is: “We don’t have the resources to invest in innovation”.

However, that’s a misguided mindset to take here at the dawn of 2014; innovation no longer automatically equals “massive investment”.

The Lean Startup is a methodology that allows startups and functional teams alike to shorten product development cycles and introduce new concepts to the market. First thrust upon the North American startup ecosystem in 2011, lean startup teams focus on creating the ‘minimum viable product’ (MVP), which is the most basic version of a product that is required to start

validating the concept with real-world customers.

With the lean startup approach, new ideas can be tested inexpensively. If actionable metrics demonstrate traction from early users, rapid iteration and continuous employment can then help refine the MVP into a more polished product. With today’s low cost of bandwidth and storage coupled with readily available (and free) open source technologies, the rule of thumb is that a skilled team of 3-4 should be able to produce an MVP in 90 days for around \$50,000 (£30,000).

We’ve recently seen William Hill announce a mobile ‘centre of excellence’ in Shoreditch, and Ladbrokes level-up its mobile capabilities in partnership with Chelsea Apps Factory. While one would expect Britain’s largest bookmakers to make such large-scale investments in innovation, not every operator can make such drastic moves. The good news is that adopting a lean startup mindset means that drastic moves aren’t actually so necessary, and operators of any size can now make innovation a priority with only modest investment. Here’s to a truly innovative 2014!”

Jesse Learmonth is the president of Bet Smart Media, who have been providing web and mobile development to betting brands since 2010. Read more at: betSMARTmedia.com

Want to be a guest columnist in GI Friday? Write to: editor@gamblinginsider.com

“I thought Facebook was supposed to be about friends and relationships? Not a social content aggregator.”
Tech journalist **Benedict Evans**
[[@BenedictEvans](https://twitter.com/BenedictEvans)] on Facebook’s changes to its News Feed

“Maybe it’s time to ban footballers from betting on anything while active, full stop. Have seen too many wild eyed gamblers on team coaches.”
Former footballer and pundit **Stan Collymore** [[@StanCollymore](https://twitter.com/StanCollymore)] on the match-fixing scandal

“MGM head of global security tells Massachusetts Gaming Commission organized crime in Macau still a major issue.”
The Wall Street Journal’s Asia casino reporter **Kate O’Keeffe** [[@Kate_OKeeffe](https://twitter.com/Kate_OKeeffe)]

BETTINGJOBS.COM
REVOLUTIONISING I-GAMING RECRUITMENT

RUBY DEVELOPER

Salary: Up to £45k.

Location: Dublin, Republic of Ireland

A Ruby developer is required to work in an IT team based in the centre of Dublin. The client are a key player in the online sports-betting and gaming sector and this role will suit an experienced Ruby developer looking to work in a growing and exciting sector. Ruby development experience is essential, as is expert knowledge of OO techniques and best practices for code reuse and testing. Also essential is experience of JavaScript frameworks eg Prototype JS / JQuery etc and a knowledge of the full web stack including HTTP, CSS, REST. Relevant IT degree or work experience is desirable.

Apply to dgosling@bettingjobs.com
using reference GI - david01

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MOBILE WEB DEVELOPER

Salary: £50-60k.

Location: London, UK

A leading online sports-betting and gaming company are looking for a mobile web developer to join their team. Heavy investment in the development of their mobile platforms has created the demand for an additional team member. Good knowledge of cross-mobile-browser web applications is required, as is good knowledge of HTML5, CSS3, Webkit CSS constructs, Javascript, Ajax and Web 2.0, as well as JQuery & JQuery UI. Also required is knowledge of Java to work in Java-based web environments as well as knowledge of design patterns and XML, XSLT, XPATH, JSON, Web services (SOAP & RestFul) etc.

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